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SUBJECT: OSCE AMBASSADOR FINLEY MEETS CHAIRMAN KANERVA IN
FINLAND

Classified By: POLOFF LISA CONESA FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: US OSCE Ambassador Julie Finley separately met with Finnish Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman in Office (CiO) Ilkka Kanerva and MFA State Secretary Teija Tiilikainen in Helsinki January 30. Kanerva expressed gratitude for the US response to Finland's OSCE agenda presented in Vienna a few weeks ago. Minister Kanerva outlined the challenges facing the Finnish CiO: Russia, ODIHR, elections, Kosovo, frozen conflicts, and the future. Tiilikainen and Harkonen reviewed the same areas in the preceding meeting. End Summary.

¶2. (U) During a one-day stop in Helsinki on January 30, Ambassador to the OSCE Julie Finley held separate meetings with Finnish Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman in Office (CiO) Ilkka Kanerva and with MFA State Secretary Teija Tiilikainen. Finley was accompanied by Ambassador Marilyn Ware and PolOff (note taker) for the Kanerva meeting and by DCM Amy Hyatt and PolOff for the Tiilikainen meeting. Head of the Finnish MFA's OSCE Chairmanship Task Force (CTF) Ambassador Aleksi Harkonen and Deputy Head of the OSCE CTF Janne Taalas accompanied Kanerva and Tiilikainen.

Kanerva on Russia, Kosovo and ODIHR

¶3. (C) Kanerva said that over the last few days, news from ODIHR and the parliamentary assembly on efforts to gain agreement for an effective observation mission had not been good. Conditions appear to be hardening for Russian election observation (March 2). The Russians will allow observers in starting February 28, but Kanerva said it made no sense to go 3 days before the election. 70 observers with limited time on a short observation mission is not realistic. The OSCE sent a letter to Moscow with a constructive counter proposal (20 observers next week, 50 the following), which would improve the mission's chance for a reasonable observation. Kanerva was awaiting the reply from Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and still hoped at the time that the response would be positive. (Note: these negotiations eventually failed, and ODIHR cancelled any plans to observe the Russian presidential elections.)

¶4. (C) Kanerva also raised his concern that the Russian attempt to undermine the OSCE mission in Kosovo (OMIK) could undermine the institutional credibility of the organization as a whole. The symbolic face of the OSCE's Human Dimension is election monitoring, he said, but Russia's decision on elections will have serious consequences and the OSCE needs to unite in one voice to prevent any attempt to Undermine ODIHR. He also noted that the Russians will "veto" a continuing mandate for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) should Pristina unilaterally declare independence. Finley shared Kanerva's concerns, noting the importance of retaining OMIK's presence in Kosovo.

Med Partners and Trafficking

15. (C) Kanerva and Finley discussed ways to get the most out of the OSCE's efforts with its Mediterranean partners, and to gain the appropriate profile for OSCE work on trafficking in persons. Finley asked Kanerva if he had given thought to bringing in Libya and Lebanon as OSCE Med partners. She also suggested a higher profile for TIP activities, perhaps bringing in headline activists, would offer the opportunity to work on a noncontroversial issue that is not fraught with the tensions that underpin discussions of ODIHR or the budget.

Tiilikainen on Russian Elections and ODIHR's Challenges

16. (C) Like Kanerva, Tiilikainen named the observation of the March 2 Russian election as the first challenge for the Finnish Chairmanship. The ODIHR has stated that it will not participate under conditions where observation begins 3 days prior to the election and is not realistic. OSCE/ODIHR reconsidered the size of the observation group in response to Russia's demands. Tiilikainen sees the ODIHR role in the OSCE as seriously challenged by this event because it undermines the credibility of the OSCE in Europe and the world. Finley said we needed to keep supporting ODIHR's autonomy, but advocated allowing the Russians to vent in open discussion at the organization so that they feel heard and not isolated. Tiilikainen stated that Russia is given proper conditions and the same rules as everyone else, and questioned the Russians' willingness to discuss.

Money, Money, Money: Ask for More, Get Less

17. (SBU) Tiilikainen and Harkonen then turned to the budget. Tiilikainen sought compromise on the OSCE budget. Finley

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asked that the OSCE remember the US's previous generosity to the organization and explained that for a number of reasons, additional resources will not be available this year nor are there prospects for improvements in coming years, which argues for a roll-over for the next 3 years of the current scale of assessments. Finley suggested approaching the Russians for a fairer share based on their equal vote in the organization and their need to have a voice in the only transatlantic organization available to them. Tiilikainen remarked that the Russian Ambassador in Vienna links unhappiness with the current OSCE emphasis together with the budget issue, implying that they will not part with funds if things are not going their way. Harkonen expressed concern that adopting a one-year roll-over of the current scales, as suggested by the Russians, would leave the budget problem for the Greeks to solve.

Comment

18. (SBU) The Finley visit, early in the Finnish Chairmanship, was much appreciated by the Finns and was timed well, coming just before Kanvera's OSCE-themed trip to Washington. End comment.

19. (U) Ambassador Finley has cleared this cable.
HYATT